

KENNEDY, Jimmy Carter, Governor Hugh Carey, Mario Cuomo, Mayor Ed Koch, David Dinkins and President Bill and Senator HILLARY CLINTON and welcomed them into our Queens County home.

Her intelligence, her warmth and kindness have made everyone who has come into contact with her feel welcome and comfortable.

However, Mary Lu's reach went well beyond local politics. You have to keep in mind, Madam Speaker, that Queens County has 2.3 million people who live in just that county alone. When she was not at county headquarters, she was working to create a better Queens, and in particular, a better Rockaway, her hometown in Queens County. For example, every year she hosted an annual fundraiser that was a must-attend event to help the children of St. Gertrude's Parish in Far Rockaway.

On top of all she has done for others, most important to her, I think, is her role as a mother and as a grandmother. There is nothing that Mary Lu won't do or hasn't done for her two children, Steve and Jamie; and her three grandchildren, Matthew, Christopher, and Caroline; and their mom, Nancy.

I have tremendous respect for Mary Lu and all she has accomplished throughout her years, but as her friend, I'm most proud of how she has led her family life, and I have always considered myself an extended member of that family, often enjoying many personal moments in the Rockaways, getting sand in my shoes with the Plunkett family.

In the coming weeks, my fellow friends and colleagues in Queens County will gather to honor Mary Lu for her lifetime of service to our great borough and to our great city and to our great country. We will applaud her for her charity, her wit and political skill, and I want to thank her for being a mentor and a friend.

Mary Lu, we love you and we congratulate you on your lifetime of achievement.

ECONOMIC STIMULUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ENGLISH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, the current subprime housing crisis, coupled with volatile energy prices, rising costs in health care and looming tax increases, among others, have put our country on the dark path of economic slowdown. And although not yet a technical recession, it certainly feels like a recession in the communities that I represent in western Pennsylvania.

Clearly, America's hardworking families and employers are feeling the crunch from the slowing economy.

While there's a growing consensus in Washington that Congress needs to take action on a stimulus package to stave off further economic challenges,

an agreement on how to proceed remains very elusive.

In addition to recently participating in a Joint Economic Committee hearing on the state of the economy, I've met with half a dozen respected economists, and I strongly believe that unless Congress acts swiftly on a stimulus package that will inject money into the American economy and incentivize job creation, middle class America will be forced to bear the brunt of our country's economic instability.

To be clear, now is not the time for politics as usual. We need to unite to enact sound stimulus legislation that, among other things, will benefit both wage earners and job creators, will encourage investment in good paying jobs, and will put more money back into the pockets of working families.

Now, how can Congress achieve these goals on a bipartisan basis? In my view, Madam Speaker, the single best way to help struggling employers in this climate, while providing a jumpstart to the economy, is to allow companies to quickly recapture the money they invest in capital.

Congress should step up to the plate today to create incentives for American employers to invest in new equipment, to revive bonus depreciation to boost employer's capital, and to work to enact common-sense policies that will curb the reach of the corporate alternative minimum tax at exactly the time when its reach is most devastating, during economic downturns.

At the same time, Congress must explore ways in which we can mitigate the impact of a sluggish economy on low and moderate income families that are now facing new and severe economic uncertainty.

By extending unemployment benefits, rolling the income tax on unemployment benefits back, and increasing the child tax credit and providing a significant tax rebate for middle-class families, Congress can ensure that every American has access to the financial resources they need to weather this pending economic storm.

While I've outlined a stimulus plan that will create an environment for job growth, reform how we tax American employers and improve UC benefits for the long-term unemployed, Congress must be vigilant in crafting a pro-growth plan that will not disturb the government's fiscal balance.

I believe frankly we need to avoid absurd PAYGO rhetoric which, coupled with a liberal budget requiring tax increases, now seems to be hobbling action on the other side of the aisle.

Over the past year, some of my friends on the other side of the aisle have insisted on a budget that would impose substantial tax increases on a struggling American economy.

These Herbert Hoover Democrats have used the labels of tax reform and revenue neutrality as a carnival mask to conceal a policy of higher taxes and higher spending, essentially placing a

higher percentage of the American economy under government control, and this at a time when the economy is vulnerable, facing slower economic growth.

Instead of setting new priorities, the new majority has chosen to throw priority setting to the wind and have undermined the benefits of the very tax policies that have grown the economy and helped America's middle class.

At the time of economic hardship, when Americans are struggling to make ends meet, it would be inconceivable to place additional, unnecessary tax burdens on the backs of middle class America.

Madam Speaker, time is of the essence. Putting the economy back on a growth path must be a top priority for Washington. Congress must move on a bipartisan basis to enact a stimulus package that is swift, significant and effective.

We need to set aside sterile politics of class warfare and embrace strong pro-growth tax policies that will help benefit everyone by reinvigorating the American economy.

HONORING PRIVATE BOOKER TOWNSELL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Madam Speaker, Senator BILL NELSON and I introduced legislation today to amend the dark chapter of American history by providing a fair and just settlement for our African American soldiers who were wrongly convicted after an incident at Fort Lawton during World War II.

Last Saturday, I stood with the family of Booker Townsell at his gravesite in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. At long last, Private Booker Townsell received a burial with full honors, in a ceremony filled with emotion and symbolism. At long last, Booker Townsell received the military honors he deserved.

I want to read into the RECORD the remarks I read last Saturday because Booker and his family deserve to have his long overdue military honors permanently etched into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

In the House, I represent Seattle in King County, Washington, home to Fort Lawton and home to author Jack Hamann. He exposed what Booker Townsell, his family and others have often lived and known for a long time, that the color of their skin determined their fate and denied them due process.

And on behalf of the people in my Seventh District, who live in a county proudly named in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, let me sum up our feelings by quoting Dr. King: Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.

That's why I got into this fight. America cannot and must not permit